

LGBTQ+ Workgroup

Notes/Minutes: 1/14/2020

I. Welcome/Introductions

The beginning of the meeting started off with the County Executive inviting and thanking everyone in the space for joining such an important and historic moment. The County Executive then began by reading the executive order which established the LGBTQ+ workgroup as well as conveying his intentions in creating the work group.

Afterwards the group was led through a process of introductions/building rapport with those in the room. This process was meant to connect all parties in the space to one another and the overall purpose of what we were there to do...honor each other as well as create space to explore the complex realities associated with those that exist within the LGBTQ+ spectrum

II. Defining: Vision, Mission, Purpose

During this portion of the meeting workgroup and community members were led through a facilitated dialogue focused on the expected outcomes the County Executives outlined for the work group and centered around the questions below. This dialogue led the collective to establishing the Vision, Mission, and Purpose of the LGBTQ+ workgroup. The Vision, Mission, and Purpose are meant to ensure that the workgroup is supporting the interest of the LGBTQ+ community which inherently supports the interest of all Howard County citizens.

Vision: *To create an open and transparent forum/space for community to inform/effect the direction and focus of the LGBTQ+ workgroup. The intention is for the LGBTQ+ workgroup to work as a conduit for resources and a support system on behalf of the LGBTQ+ communities' interests.*

Mission: *To educate and inform all Howard County citizens on genuine and authentic ways to honor the dignity of citizens that reside within the*

LGBTQ+ community. The intention is to identify and inform tangible policy changes that will make Howard County a more inclusive, safe, and welcoming space for the LGBTQ+ community.

Purpose: *To correct cultural hiccups that undermine the dignity of the LGBTQ+ community by increasing visibility, resources, and supports. The intention is to affirm and validate the realities and needs of individuals that reside in the LGBTQ+ community.*

III. Outcomes/Tangible activities

During this portion of the meeting, workgroup and community members discussed the best and most effective use of time when the LGBTQ+ workgroup meet as well as focusing on ways to create tangible and long-lasting outcomes that will directly impact the betterment of the LGBTQ+ community. This was accomplished by using the questions below to generator conversation to create categories of focus. These categories are Supports, Activities/Events, and Trainings/Presentations/Education.

Supports:

- *Creation and Support of LGBTQ+ employee groups within different county agencies and institutions.*
- *Support existing Ally training models created and maintained by community groups and organizations within Howard County that support LGBTQ+ interests.*
- *Identify the difference in needs and supports intergenerationally.*
- *Support and advertise existing LGBTQ+ events and endeavors within the county*
- *Partnering with and finding ways to support the Office of Human Trafficking.*

Activities/Events:

- *Symposium focused on relevant and current issues that affect the LGBTQ+ communities.*
- *Specific events focus on transgender education.*
- *Co-Sponsoring the SAGE table dinner and discussion.*

- *Create spaces for human libraries specifically focused on individuals that identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.*
- *Creation of meet and greet/safe space for transgender individuals to connect and validate lived experience.*
- *Talk nights: conversations, facilitated dialogue, or story sharing that provide opportunities for community members to genuinely connect around lived experience providing natural paths for support and establishing authentic allies.*
- *Supporting comprehensive and realistic sexual education as it applies to all individuals regardless of sexual preference, sex, or perceived gender.*

Training/Presentations/Education:

- *Develop educational presentations for community organizations within the county. Presentations will be held in alignment with the organizations meeting schedule to ensuring that we meet community members where they are at.*
- *Providing specifics in report format to department heads to ensure that all Howard county programs, services, activities, and events honor the humanity of those within the LGBTQ+ community.*
 - *Departments within Howard County Government that readily interact with the community are priority: HCPD, Dept. of Aging, Recs & Parks, DCRS, Corrections*
 - *Departments and organizations outside of Howard County Government that frequently interact with the community are also priority, however the workgroup recognizes that we have significantly less power/pull when it comes to them: HCC, HCLS, MVA, HCPSS, Columbia Association.*
- *Create a report that educates and informs the public of relevant information as it pertains to the wellbeing and betterment of citizens within the LGBTQ+ community.*
 - *Report should include assessment of current realities connected to LGBTQ+ individuals in Howard County.*
 - *Report should provide calls to action that positively impact the lives of those that identify within the LGBTQ+ spectrum.*
 - *Report should be informed by qualitative and quantitative data and analysis.*

IV. Roles/Responsibility/Tasks & Action Items

During this portion of the meeting the workgroup discussed practical steps and actionable items to get done before the next quarterly meeting. The focus of this conversation was a call to action to find two student members (one high school representative and one college representative) to sit on the workgroup as a member.

V. Upcoming events/ Announcements

- **Next meeting: Wednesday, April 15th 6:00pm – 8:00pm**
- **PFLAG:**
 - Gay Day @ the Mill 2020 – 1/16/2020 5:00 pm – 1:00 am
 - HoCo Pride - Currently looking for volunteers for various roles.
- **HopeWorks:**
 - “Using the Arts & Humanities to Explore Oppression and Revolution Project.”
 - Sage Table
- **Human Rights Commission** meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month (*except August*) at 7pm.